Yavapai language

Yavapai is an Upland Yuman language, spoken by Yavapai people in central and western Arizona. There are four dialects: Kwevkepaya, Wipukpaya, Tolkepaya, and Yavepe. Linguistic studies of the Kwevkepaya (Southern), Tolkepaya (Western), Wipukepa (Verde Valley), and Yavepe (Prescott) dialects have been published (Mithun 1999:578).

Yavapai was once spoken across much of north-central and western Arizona, but is now mostly spoken on the Yavapai reservations at Fort McDowell, the Verde Valley and Prescott.

Yavapai	
Region	Arizona, United States
Ethnicity	1,420 Yavapai people (2004)[1]
Native speakers	245 (2015 census)[2]
Language family	Yuman - Core Yuman - Pai **Yavapai**
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	yuf Havasupai-Walapai-Yavapai
Glottolog	hava1248 (http://glottolog. org/resource/languoid/id/ha va1248) Havasupai-Walapai-Yavapai[3] yava1252 (http://glottolog. org/resource/languoid/id/ya va1252) Yavapai[4]

Contents

Geographic distribution

The rate of mutual comprehension between Yavapai and Havasupai–Hualapai is similar to that between Mohave and Maricopa (Biggs 1957).

Warren Gazzam, a Tolkapaya speaker, reported that "you know they (Hualapais) speak the same language as we do, some words or accents are a little different".[5]

Due to extensive cultural interchange, many Yavapai were once bilingual in Apache, and some Apache were bilingual in Yavapai.[6]

Unlike in Havasupai and Hualapai, postaspirated stops cannot appear in word-initial position (Shaterian 1983:215).

Phonology

Yavapai has a large number of consonant phonemes.[7]

Consonants in Yavapai

		Bilabial	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palatal	Velar			Uvular		Glottal	
							nor.	lab.	pal.	nor.	lab.	nor.	lab.
Plosive	plain	p	t				k	kʷ	kʲ	q	qʷ	ʔ	
	aspirated	pʰ	tʰ				kʰ	kʰʷ					
Affricate	plain				tʃ								
	aspirated				tʃʰ								
Fricative		β	θ	s	ʃ							h	hʷ
Nasal		m	n			ɲ							
Trill			r										
Lateral			l			ʎ							
Approximant		w				j							

Vowels are /a/, /æ/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/.

Syntax

Yavapai is a subject-verb-object language.[8]

/-k/ and /-m/ Problem

According to Martha Kendall, the morphemes /k/ and /m/ are "semantically contrastable," but are pronounced the same. She writes that homophony is present in Yavapai, and /k/ and /m/ are similar in phonological situations, but are syntactically different.[9]

Examples

Some sample words given in Yavapai translation:[10]

English	Yavapai
Hello	Mhamka
Home	Wah yoh woh
Land	Mat
Rivers	Ahakhela
Fire	O'o
Grand Caynon	Mat K'i:la *or* Wika'ilaha
Thank you	'ara'ye:km

Preservation efforts

There have been recordings of Yavapai (as well as other Yuman languages) done in 1974, relating to phonology, syntax, and grammar. This was meant to understand the three topics better and to hear them.[11]

There is an effort to revitalize the language. There is a Yavapai language program for adults to learn the language and pass on to future generations.[12]

There have been attempts to save the language in Yavapai community.[13]

Poetry and stories have been published in Yavapai on several different occasions. Yavapai poems are featured in *Gigyayk Vo'jka*, the anthology of poetry in Yuman languages edited by Hualapai linguist Lucille Watahomigie. Yavapai stories also appear in *Spirit Mountain: An Anthology of Yuman Story and Song*. Both works are accompanied by English translations, and the poems in Gigyayk Vo'jka also feature a morphological analysis.

Alan Shaterian has published a dictionary of Northeastern Yavapai. Pamela Munro is working on a dictionary and grammar for Tolkepaya.

Footnotes

1. Havasupai-Walapai-Yavapai (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/yuf/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Yavapai (https://www.ethnologue.com/19/language/yuf/) at *Ethnologue* (19th ed., 2016)
3. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Havasupai-Walapai-Yavapai" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/hava1248). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
4. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Yavapai" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/yava1252). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
5. http://cla.berkeley.edu/item/16506
6. Mierau, Eric (January 1963). "Concerning Yavapai-Apache Bilingualism". *International Journal of American Linguistics*. **29** (1): 1–3. doi:10.1086/464706 (https://doi.org/10.1086%2F464706).
7. Shaterian, Alan (1983). *Phonology and Dictionary of Yavapai* (http://escholarship.org/uc/item/9671j4f8#page-61).
8. Kendall, Martha. "Relative Clause Formation and Topicalization in Yavapai". *International Journal of American Linguistics*. doi:10.1086/465291 (https://doi.org/10.1086%2F465291).
9. Kendall, Martha (1975). "The /-k/, /-m/ Problem in Yavapai Syntax". *International Journal of American Linguistics*. doi:10.1086/465333 (https://doi.org/10.1086%2F465333).
10. "Yavapai Apache Language" (https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsm91_050024.ppt).
11. Kendall, Martha Oaks (Burnett); Sine, Harold (2017-03-09). "Yavapai linguistic material" (http://amphilsoc.org/collections/view?docId=ead/Mss.Rec.100-ead.xml). Retrieved 2017-03-09.
12. House, Deborah. "Yavapai Language Programs". *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages*.
13. "Museum honors Yavapai elder for language work - USATODAY.com" (http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/states/arizona/2009-10-02-3845832559_x.htm). *usatoday30.usatoday.com*. Retrieved 2017-03-09.

References

- Biggs, Bruce. 1957. Testing Intelligibility among Yuman Languages. In *International Journal of American Linguistics*. Vol. 23, No. 2. (April 1957), pp. 57–62. University of Chicago Press.
- Mithun, Marianne. 1999. *The Languages of Native North America*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shaterian, Alan William. 1983. *Phonology and Dictionary of Yavapai*. University of California, Berkeley.

External links

- "Language use by Yavapai-Apache students with recommendations for curriculum design" (http://jaie.asu.edu/v20/V20S1lang.html). *Journal of American Indian Education*. **20** (1). October 1980. Retrieved 11 October 2011.
- Yavapai basic lexicon at the Global Lexicostatistical Database (http://starling.rinet.ru/cgi-bin/response.cgi?root=new100&morpho=0&basename=new100\hok\yum&first=0)